

Office party planning

Listen to the conversation with an event planner to practise and improve your listening skills.

Before listening

Do the preparation task first. Then listen to the audio and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. to reassemble
2. to source
3. to stretch
4. to be fixed on something
5. to hoist
6. to dismantle
7. to exceed
8. to be inventive

Definition

- a. to find or locate something
- b. to take something apart
- c. to put something back together again
- d. to creatively think of new or interesting ideas
- e. to raise or lift something up
- f. to allow something that would not normally be allowed
- g. to go beyond a pre-defined limit
- h. to have already decided on something, without further flexibility

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

- | | Answer | |
|---|---------------|-------|
| 1. Ayako wants a baby grand piano for the Christmas party. | True | False |
| 2. The baby grand piano will easily fit through the building doorway. | True | False |
| 3. Sam suggests a solution for the problem. | True | False |
| 4. Ayako has around 50 per cent flexibility with the budget. | True | False |
| 5. Ayako is fixed on the idea that it must be a baby grand piano. | True | False |
| 6. Ayako accepts the upright piano when Sam suggests it. | True | False |

Task 2

Put the words in order to make sentences.

1. a good That sounds like plan.
2. idea this work, then. So won't
3. being I Sorry if wasn't clear.
4. an option? Would be this
5. it That might sounds work. like
6. of over Could some send it? me you photos
7. it and call I'll you me about back. Let think
8. I'll wait call. your for

Discussion

When was the last time you had to discuss a problem on the phone?

Transcript

Ayako: Hello, sales department. This is Ayako speaking. How can I help you?

Sam: Hi, Ayako, this is Sam from Events-4-U. I'm calling about the piano you want at your Christmas party next month.

Ayako: Oh, good. It would be a great surprise to have one there for our boss for the night. He can play and it would be a great addition for the party. Have you been able to source one?

Sam: Well, yes, I have, but ...

Ayako: But what?

Sam: Well, we're going to either have an issue with the logistics or the budget, or possibly both.

Ayako: Oh dear.

Sam: Well, we've found a baby grand piano, as you requested, and it's available for the date you want.

Ayako: OK, great. So what's the issue? Is it too expensive?

Sam: No, it's within the budget you gave me, so everything there is OK. But it's too wide for the entrance doorway into the building.

Ayako: Oh, I see. So what are our options? Could we dismantle it outside and reassemble it inside?

Sam: Er, no. Unfortunately, you can't really do that with pianos. But don't worry, I'm sure we can find some inventive solution.

Ayako: Do you have any ideas?

Sam: Well, we could hoist it up to the first-floor balcony. The door there would be large enough to fit it through.

Ayako: Great. That sounds like a good plan.

Sam: That would work, though it would increase the cost considerably as we'd need a crane, an extension on the insurance policy and probably two to three additional people to manage getting it successfully into the building.

Ayako: Oh, I see. Well, we can definitely stretch the budget by about ten per cent, but we shouldn't go over that. If we exceed the budget by more than ten per cent, then other areas of the party budget will have to be cut. And we don't really want that.

Sam: OK, so this idea won't work then. Sorry if I wasn't being clear. The considerable budget increase I was referring to would add a further fifty per cent. You know, cranes are expensive.

Ayako: Oh ... um ... OK. So what other options do we have?

Sam: Well, how fixed are you on the piano being a baby grand? Would an upright piano be an option?

Ayako: Hmm. I don't know.

Sam: It would fit through the door on the ground floor and cause fewer problems. I've also got the option on a really nice white vintage upright piano, with black design work.

Ayako: OK. That sounds like it might work. Could you send me over some photos of it?

Sam: I'll do it now, together with the rental and delivery information and costs.

Ayako: Great. Thanks, Sam. Let me think about it and I'll call you back later today.

Sam: Sure, no problem. I'll wait for your call.

Answers

Preparation task

1. c
2. a
3. f
4. h
5. e
6. b
7. g
8. d

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False
6. False

Task 2

1. That sounds like a good plan.
2. So this idea won't work, then.
3. Sorry if I wasn't being clear.
4. Would this be an option?
5. That sounds like it might work.
6. Could you send me over some photos of it?
7. Let me think about it and I'll call you back.
8. I'll wait for your call.